



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Train derails in Lafayette, cleanup continues

BATON ROUGE – Emergency responders for the Department of Environmental Quality continue to take air samples and assist in the cleanup efforts after six rail cars derailed in Lafayette. On Saturday night, crews removed an ethylene oxide tank car. All other five railcars, two of which contained fatty alcohols and three filled with hydrochloric acid, have been set upright. One car containing hydrochloric acid spilled an estimated 10,000 gallons.

The accident occurred on Saturday morning about 1:40 a.m. DEQ emergency response staff took air samples along the perimeter of a one-mile radius. More than an estimated 3,500 residents were evacuated from within the radius. Louisiana State Police, the Louisiana State Police Hazardous Materials Unit and other state and local authorities are working with Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad to neutralize the spilled acid and safely remove the other railcars.

DEQ remediation staff is currently working with railroad representatives and others to develop a plan to determine the extent of contamination and necessary cleanup actions.

The railcars are being cleaned. The site where the hydrochloric acid spilled is being neutralized with lime. Contractors for the railroad will then dig the neutralized material up and dispose of it in the proper manner.

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